

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01

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S/PRS - MR FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR JERABEK

IO/P - MR BLACHLY

NEA/ARN - MR BULLEN

NEA/ARP - MR. AHERNE

AF/P - MR POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

----- 104159

R 300334Z JAN 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

CINCEUR

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE, FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR JANUARY 29,
1976:

Q. THERE IS A REPORT ON THE WIRE THIS MORNING THAT THE
UNITED STATES HAS BEEN PRESSURING ISRAEL TO DEAL WITH THE
PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION IN SOME OTHER GUISE. CAN
YOU CONFIRM OR DENY THAT?

A. I HAVEN'T SEEN THE REPORT, AND I CAN NEITHER CONFIRM
NOR DENY IT.

Q. IT IS HANGING ON YOUR WALL, IT'S INSIDE.

A. ALL RIGHT. IT HAS BEEN A LONG AND UNUSUAL DAY, AND I
HAVE NOT SEEN THAT PARTICULAR REPORT. IN ANY CASE, I
DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON IT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE WASHINGTON POST REPORT
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FROM DAMASCUS THAT THE U.S. DID NOT OBJECT TO THE PLA
CROSSING INTO LEBANON OR THAT IT APPROVED IT?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANY DIRECT COMMENT ON THAT REPORT, WHICH
OF COURSE WE HAVE SEEN. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT,
CONSISTENTLY THROUGH THE PERIOD OF THE FIGHTING IN
LEBANON, WE HAVE CALLED FOR AN END TO THE FIGHTING, AND A
POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL LEBANESE. AND

WE HAVE ENCOURAGED EFFORTS TO THAT END THAT APPEAR TO HAVE A CHANCE OF SUCCESS. WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE PROGRESS BEING MADE CURRENTLY, AND RECOGNIZE THE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA IS NOW PLAYING. NOW THAT A CEASE-FIRE APPEARS TO BE TAKING HOLD, WE HOPE THAT A BASIC DOMESTIC POLITICAL ACCORD WILL BE DEVELOPED IN LEBANON THAT WILL RESTORE LASTING PEACE AND TRANQUILITY TO THE COUNTRY.

Q. DOES THAT MEAN YOU ARE IN FAVOR OF SOME REJIGGERING OF THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM COMMUNITIES?

A. I WOULDN'T WANT TO INTERPRET IT FOR YOU. WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID, I THINK, IS PROBABLY -- IT COVERS YOUR ANSWER, ONCE AGAIN. WE WOULD FAVOR A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL LEBANESE.

Q. AND WHEN YOU SAY THAT SYRIA IS NOW PLAYING A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE -- HAS IT PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE THROUGHOUT THIS LEBANESE CIVIL WAR, OR JUST RECENTLY?

A. WHAT I SAID WAS THAT WE RECOGNIZE THE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA IS PLAYING -- HAS BEEN PLAYING--

Q. I THOUGHT YOU SAID QTE NOW PLAYING. UNQTE.

A. RIGHT. WITHOUT REFERENCE TO WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST.

Q. WHAT KIND OF ROLE HAVE THEY PLAYED IN THE PAST? WE HAVE JUST COME FROM A RABIN LUNCHEON WHERE RABIN ACCUSES SYRIA OF TRYING TO ISLAMIZE LEBANON AND OPPRESSING -- AND UNCLASSIFIED

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THROUGH SYRIAN BACKING, THAT THE MOSLEMS ARE TRYING TO OPPRESS THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF LEBANON. AND HERE YOU ARE SAYING SYRIA IS PLAYING A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE. I WONDER IF YOU THINK THEY PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN SENDING THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY INTO LEBANON, FOR EXAMPLE. OR IF YOU THINK THE WAY THEY HAVE BEEN TREATING THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF LEBANON HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTIVE.

A. WE ARE ON RECORD AS OPPOSING OUTSIDE INTERVENTION FROM ANY QUARTER IN LEBANON.

Q. EVEN THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY?

A. I AM SURE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOT GOING TO BE USEFUL FOR ME AT THIS POINT TO GO BACK OVER THE RECENT

PAST, WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS. IT IS A VERY DELICATE SITUATION, WHICH HAS IMPROVED OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS.

Q. AN EARLIER QUESTION DEALING WITH THE BALANCE BETWEEN MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN, AND THE COMPROMISE WORKED OUT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT, INVOLVED A RE-JIGGERING OF THE DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM. DO WE APPROVE OF THAT?

A. I SAID WE WERE ENCOURAGED WITH THE PROGRESS BEING MADE. WE HOPE THAT A POLITICAL ACCORD WILL BE DEVELOPED.

Q. IS THAT A POLITICAL ACCORD INVOLVE IN AMERICAN MINDS A SHIFT OF THE CHRISTIAN DOMINATION OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES AND IN THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE TO THE MOSLEM POPULATION?

A. I AM REALLY NOT INFORMED ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO ELABORATE FOR YOU, AND THEREFORE PREFER NOT TO.

Q. IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AMERICAN POSITION CONCERNING LEBANON AND THE ISRAELI POSITION? IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE, OR DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES CONCERNING THEIR VIEWS ON LEBANON?

A. I CAN ONLY REPEAT FOR YOU THERE THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN UNCLASSIFIED

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TOUCH WITH ALL THE GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED, AND I AM NOT GOING TO DISCUSS HOW OUR VIEWS DIFFER OR ARE IN ACCORD WITH THE VIEWS OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION ABOUT THE FIGHTING IN THE SAHARA BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO?

A. NO PARTICULAR REACTION. WE NOTE THE REPORTS THAT FIGHTING HAS BEEN GOING ON. OBVIOUSLY SOME HAS BEEN GOING ON, BUT WE CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT A SOLUTION CAN BE REACHED BETWEEN THE PARTIES INVOLVED THERE.

Q. BACK TO THIS ALGERIA-MOROCCO FLAP AGAIN, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SAID YESTERDAY THERE ARE, AS I RECALL, ABOUT 600 RUSSIANS ADVISING THE ALGERIANS. THE RUSSIANS SAY THERE ARE SOME CUBANS AND NORTH VIETNAMESE ALSO IN ALGERIA AS ADVISORS. WE ARMED THE MOROCCANS. THE SOVIET UNION ARMED THE ALGERIANS. DO WE INTEND TO MAKE ANY REPRESENTATIONS IN THIS AFFAIR AT ALL TO TRY TO PUT DOWN THE PROBLEM

BETWEEN THESE TWO COUNTRIES?

A. I HAVE NO INDICATION OF THAT. YOU MENTIONED, DIDN'T YOU, THE REPORTS OF CUBANS BEING THERE?

Q. YES.

A. WE HAVE SEEN REPORTS OF THAT, BUT HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF IT.

Q. WILL THERE BE AN INDIVIDUAL OR A JOINT REQUEST BY THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL FOR RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AS A RESULT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS HERE OVER THE LAST THREE DAYS?

A. I DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT. I DO NOT THINK IT IS CLEAR. I THINK WE OUGHT TO WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAS COME OUT OF THOSE NEGOTIATIONS, AND I REALLY AM NOT ENLIGHTENED ENOUGH TO TELL YOU.

Q. DOES THE UNITED STATES SEE ANY SERIOUS PURPOSE IN RE-UNCLASSIFIED

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CONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IF SYRIA WOULD BOYCOTT IT?

A. DO WE SEE A SERIOUS REASON TO RECONVENE IF SYRIA WOULD BOYCOTT?

Q. WOULD WE GO ALONG WITH RECONVENING A GENEVA CONFERENCE IF SYRIA WERE TO SAY IT WOULD NOT ATTEND?

A. SPECIFICALLY I DO NOT KNOW. YOU KNOW THAT WE SAID THAT WE ARE FLEXIBLE ON THAT SUBJECT. WE ARE READY TO GO IN ANY NEGOTIATING DIRECTION THE PARTIES THEMSELVES WOULD LIKE TO GO.

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